

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Fidel Castro: How Cuban working people made a socialist revolution
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 85/NO. 46 DECEMBER 13, 2021

Editorial: *Build support for women's right to have an abortion!*

As the *Militant* goes to press, the Supreme Court was hearing arguments over a Mississippi law that poses a direct challenge to a woman's legal right to choose whether to have an abortion.

Organizing to win a strong majority of working people to support women's right to choose is crucial both for women's fight for emancipation from second-class citizenship and for the struggles of the entire working class against oppression and exploitation.

A woman's decision about whether and when to bear a child, must be hers alone. Controlling her own body is crucial if women are to plan and control their own lives. It is not the business of courts, government agencies, doctors or anyone else. All women must have access to family planning services, including birth control and safe and secure abortion if they want it.

This is key to advancing the fight for women's full economic and political

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Back Kellogg's, Warrior Met coal mine strikers!

Bakery workers, miners battle pro-boss court orders



Picket at Battle Creek, Michigan, Kellogg's plant Nov. 28. Solidarity, food donations, joining strikers' picket lines crucial as 1,100 strikers in four states fight bosses' divisive two-tier demands.

BY AMY HUSK

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — Morale was high on the picket lines in front of the Kellogg's plant here Nov. 28 in spite of the freezing cold, wind, and snow that occasionally blasted the strikers. Some 325 workers are on strike at this plant

along with over 1,000 other Kellogg's cereal workers in Omaha, Nebraska; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Memphis, Tennessee. Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union members have been on strike against Kellogg's since Oct. 5.

The main issue is the divisive two-tier system, which allows the company to employ a layer of workers who make significantly lower wages, have no pension, and pay much higher health care costs. Mike Cramutob, a union member on the picket line, said, "Our goal is to erase the second tier." He said the company is also demanding workers give up cost-of-living increases that defend their wages from inflation. Other outstanding issues include retirement benefits and holiday and vacation pay.

Workers on the Battle Creek picket

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Canada flood social disaster is a product of capitalist greed

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — Tens of thousands of workers and farmers across British Columbia face widespread flooding, mud and rock slides after torrential rain hit central and southern parts of the province beginning Nov. 14.

The unfolding social catastrophe, however, is not caused by weather, but by the refusal of governments at all levels to prepare for such conditions and the fact that under capitalism working people are forced to live where housing is cheapest — on flood plains.

As of Nov. 17, six people were dead or missing. At least 17,775 people were forced out of their homes, entire towns were evacuated and hundreds of farms inundated. Vancouver, Canada's third-largest city and largest port, lost its road and rail links to the rest of the country.

Tens of thousands of cattle, hogs and poultry were trapped and killed.

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Rejecting self-defense claim, jury convicts killers of Ahmaud Arbery



Riley Bunch/The Daily Times via AP
 Wanda Cooper-Jones, mother of Ahmaud Arbery, watches as Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp, seated, signed repeal of Civil War-era "citizen's arrest" law May 10. Three men who killed Arbery claimed law as their defense. Overturn of law was gain of protests against killing.

BY SAM MANUEL

ATLANTA — Three men involved in the vigilante-style entrapment and killing of 25-year-old African American jogger Ahmaud Arbery last year were found guilty Nov. 24 in a unanimous verdict by a nearly all-white jury.

Arbery was chased and gunned down by Travis McMichael while his father, Gregory McMichael, a retired county investigator, drew down on the youth with his pistol from the back of their

truck. They were joined in the assault by William Bryan, a neighbor who used his truck to help the McMichaels trap Arbery "like a rat," the elder McMichael told investigators.

Only after protests swelled in the months following the shooting demanding the McMichaels be arrested did facts begin to emerge of how the chase and killing unfolded. It took 74 days, and a number of changes in prosecutors, be-

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Join 'Militant' to reach out to 1,333 new subscribers

BY SETH GALINSKY

The international drive to expand the readership of the *Militant* and of books by revolutionary leaders and to raise funds for the Socialist Workers Party was a big success. The decision to go for higher goals than previous drives — based on what workers face and are discussing — was proven correct.

As party members continue to reach out broadly among working people they are getting back in touch with those they met.

"We want to go over to their homes and talk about what they've been

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Workers need to use our unions to fight against the ravages of inflation

BY TERRY EVANS

With no end in sight to the biggest price hikes in decades, especially on food, gas and other necessities, strikes by workers at Kellogg's cereal plants, ExxonMobil in Texas and at Warrior Met Coal in Alabama set an important example for workers everywhere. By using our unions to fight, striking workers show we can stand up to the bosses and struggle together for protection from the effects of today's crisis of capitalist production and trade.

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Canada flood is social disaster

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The flooded region included dairy and poultry farms that provide about half the province’s daily supply. Blueberry and vegetable crops have been decimated.

In many places grocery store shelves are empty, gasoline has been rationed and transportation for people needing cancer treatments and other life-saving medical care has been blocked.

The flooding also hit neighboring Washington state.

Capitalist politicians from both the capital in Ottawa and in British Columbia mask their responsibility for the social catastrophe by blaming heavy rain, flooding and mudslides on climate change. “These are extraordinary events not measured before, not contemplated before,” claimed New Democratic Party Premier John Horgan. But in fact, scientists have been warning of a catastrophe like this for decades.

In 2006, Steve Litke, director of water programs for the Fraser Basin Council, said a major flood would lead to dike failures with disastrous consequences for people living below the dikes on either side of the river.

Capitalist property developers build housing for working people on flood plains to rake in profits off the cheapest land. The country’s ruling capitalist families and their middle-class hangers-on live elsewhere.

British Columbia’s New Democratic Party government Deputy Premier Mike Farnsworth says flood management is no longer its responsibility. In 2003 it dumped this on local governments and different agencies that “may not have adequate staffing or technical capacity,” the province’s auditor general warned in 2018.

Decades of logging of mountainous areas by forest companies, backed by the provincial government, contributed to conditions making deadly mudslides more likely in the event of heavy rain.

Working people organize solidarity

It was four days into the disaster before the British Columbia government declared a state of emergency, reflecting the rulers’ disdain for working people. Ottawa then sent in a handful of federal troops to help with sandbagging and other flood-related tasks.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau didn’t show up until Nov. 26, almost two weeks after the storm struck, posing for photo-ops with flood victims, offering vague promises of future funds to help in reconstruction. Working people were left to fend for themselves.

“Our unions should demand that Ottawa immediately establish a massive federally funded public works program,” said Steve Penner, organizer of the Communist League in Canada, in a Nov. 26 statement, “to build new houses for those who are homeless, repair houses that were badly damaged and rebuild B.C.’s dikes and pump systems so they can withstand future storms, as well as repair damaged roads and bridges.”

“Working farmers need immediate, massive relief to rebuild their farms and replace dead livestock. All farm foreclosures should be stopped and debts canceled.”

There have been countless examples of solidarity among workers and farmers whose lives have been upended.

A couple hundred volunteers from the cities of Abbotsford and Chilliwack worked through the night to build a dam of sandbags to keep a

India farmers’ year of protests defeats gov’t attacks



Press Trust of India

Farmers meeting at the Gazipur protest encampment outside India’s capital, New Delhi, Nov. 26 celebrate after their massive yearlong mobilizations were victorious, forcing Prime Minister Narendra Modi to rescind new agricultural laws that threatened their livelihoods. These laws would have removed state-backed minimum price protections on staple grains and open up toilers on the land to greater exploitation by agricultural capitalists.

Indian farmers “don’t trust Modi,” Kulpreet Singh told this *Militant* reporter Nov. 27 in New York’s Times Square at the end of a victory car caravan. The 29-year-old immigrant worker, whose family has farmed for generations in India’s Punjab state, said the farmers are “not going back until this is finalized.”

Two days later, the Indian rulers hastily pushed a bill through the two houses of Parliament scrapping the laws. They were rushing to try to demobilize one of the biggest challenges to their “modernizing” drive since Modi’s Hindu nationalist government came to power in 2014.

In the past year up to 2 million farmers, mostly from the grain belt states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, have taken part in the huge tent “cities” set up on highways leading into the Indian capital. While the Modi government will now keep the state-controlled pricing levels on wheat, rice and other staple grains, many farmers are pushing to extend this to cover other crops. They are also demanding compensation to the families of over 750 farmers who lost their lives during the protests.

— ROY LANDERSEN

crucial pumping station working and prevent much worse flooding. Residents then banded together to rescue stranded cattle.

A stranger pulled up at Karl Loewen’s poultry farm near Abbotsford Nov. 17 with seven Hereford cattle in the trailer. Hours earlier Loewen’s wife announced on social media that the family had room in their old dairy barn.

“I’m not sure how long we’re gonna have the cattle for, but it doesn’t really matter,” Loewen said. “We’ll just take care of them like they’re our own.” Volunteers have also organized to get portable water tanks and animal feed to farms that have none, so no more livestock are lost.

None of this has been led or organized by the capitalist rulers or their government.

In contrast, Penner noted, “the revolutionary government in socialist Cuba organizes workers and farmers to prevent natural events like hurricanes and flooding from becoming social disasters.” It ensures everyone has shelter and food and organizes volunteers and material to rebuild what is destroyed. No one is left on their own.

“Workers here need to build a labor party based on our unions to fight to replace the capitalist rulers with our own workers and farmers government,” he said.

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THE MILITANT

Malcolm X: revolutionary example for all workers

Exoneration of two Black men imprisoned for Malcolm X’s assassination raises questions about who really killed him and why. U.S. rulers feared Malcolm, a revolutionary leader of the working class who sought to awaken Blacks and others to their humanity and self-worth.



AP photo

Malcolm X speaks to youth in Alabama, Feb. 4, 1965, during battle for Black voting rights.

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Reach out to new subscribers

Continued from front page

reading in the books and the paper,” Dan Fein, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Chicago, told the *Militant*. “We will also invite them to attend the weekly Militant Labor Forum series.”

“In neighborhoods where we sold the most subscriptions we plan to keep going door to door to win new readers,” Fein said, “and we’ll see if those who already subscribed will join us.”

SWP campaigners in the U.S. and from the Communist Leagues in Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand spoke with thousands of working people as we went door to door in big cities, small towns and rural areas. We brought solidarity to strike picket lines and joined protest actions to defend women’s right to choose abortion and actions against the military coup in Sudan. During the drive hundreds met SWP-endorsed candidates and more took flyers with the party’s election campaign platform or bought single copies of the *Militant*.

In New York keeping in touch with new readers is already paying off. SWP members sold subscriptions or books to at least a half-dozen taxi drivers, while they were waiting for a fare and during a drivers’ hunger strike and encampment at City Hall demanding debt relief for owners of city-issued medallions.

One driver introduced SWP campaigners to another driver he knew. That driver also got a subscription to the *Militant*, some books and joined SWP members at a protest against the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

The *Militant* has won growing respect from unionists as the only paper that lets striking workers speak in their own words about their struggles; that explains why solidarity is crucial to the outcome of their fights for better conditions and wages; and how victories scored in these struggles set an example to all workers.

From the trial of Kyle Rittenhouse in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to rising conflicts between the rulers in the U.S. and China and what lay behind recent Democratic Party election losses, the *Militant* is indispensable for explaining all political questions from the

standpoint of the rights and interests of the working class.

It’s the only paper that explains why workers need to break from both the Democratic and Republican parties and forge our own party, a labor party, as part of opening the road to taking power out of the hands of the capitalist class. Campaigners found growing interest this fall in workers forming their own party to strengthen their class battles.

Many new readers will be interested in getting books by SWP leaders and other revolutionaries that advance the understanding, confidence and combativity of working people. These titles provide lessons from previous working-class battles vital for building the fighting labor movement we need today.

Some subscribers will want to build support for strikes by unionists at Kellogg’s, at Warrior Met Coal or other workplaces and to visit their picket lines. Some will introduce us to neighbors, relatives, friends or co-workers who they think will also be



Militant/Samir Hazboun

Matt Aubrey, UFCW Local 23D president, gets *Militant* subscription and *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?* from Maggie Trowe during Heaven Hill distillery strike this fall in Kentucky.

interested in getting the *Militant* and learning about the party.

This will put us in good stead when the *Militant* begins a campaign to win new subscribers to renew. All this work will also help us recruit new

members to the Socialist Workers Party and Communist Leagues today.

Interested in learning more? See page 8 to contact the party branch nearest you or contact the *Militant* at themilitant@mac.com.

Workers need to use unions to fight ravages of inflation

Continued from front page

Employers are driving hard to jack up our “productivity” — an index of the exploitation of our labor — while holding wages down and increasing speedup and overtime, as working conditions and job safety deteriorate.

Running at 6.2%, government inflation figures have surged to their highest annual rate since 1990. In the past year major sources of protein — meat, poultry, fish and eggs — are up on average 11.9%. Beef prices have soared over 20%. Other items working people can’t easily skimp on — heating, lighting and fuel — are up 30%.

And the government aids the bosses’ drive to profit at our expense by faking cost-of-living figures, undercounting the real impact of inflation. Big retailers and food manufacturers get in on the scam, constructing ever more underhanded means to “raise prices without raising prices,” as a Nov. 21 *Wall Street Journal* article put it.

It detailed a long list of schemes used by producers and supermarkets, like shrinking the volume, hoping you don’t notice you pay the same but get less. They’re expanding buy-one-get-one-free “offers” that make you buy more than you need or want, to try to save money. The same products now often come in three different varieties — good-better-best. The “best” version is often just fancier packaging, but costs more. Supermarkets urge you to buy larger “economy-size” packages that, in fact, are often more expensive per ounce than smaller sizes.

For many online shoppers free-shipping thresholds have been lifted from \$49 to \$99. Warehouse clubs like Costco hike “membership” tabs while trying to undercut their rivals on prices, just as gym owners raise initiation fees and landlords hike administrative charges. None of these extra costs are ever included as part of the “price.”

Over 77 million people were being hounded by debt-collection agencies at the end of September. On Nov. 30 the government gave a boost to loan sharks who prey on working people by passing rules that allow these parasites to pursue

debtors through email, texting and so-called social media.

In the face of the bosses’ offensive more workers are going on strike against paltry wage offers that are in fact cuts to *real* wages.

Fight for cost-of-living adjustments

Gains made in the recent strike by 10,000 United Auto Workers members at John Deere, which include a cost-of-living clause, should set off an “alarm bell,” warned the *Wall Street Journal* editors Nov. 18. COLAs raise wages every time prices rise, protecting workers’ living standards. They have been fought for by unions in previous decades and should be written into all contracts, including retiree pensions and government Social Security payments. And they should be based on what we really pay, not jury-rigged government statistics.

But the *Journal* editors complain these basic protections put “employers on the hook.” Extending COLA protections, they lament, will lead to “a wage-price spiral” and ongoing inflation. They try to convince workers we harm ourselves when we fight for higher pay or COLA.

These questions are not new. They were addressed by Karl Marx, a founder of the modern working-class movement, in the pamphlet *Wages, Price and Profit*. He explained where wages and profits come from, exposing bosses’ claims that pay raises lead to price increases.

Capitalist exploitation is founded on the fact that workers have no property and are forced to sell their labor power to the bosses to survive, Marx explained. Employers seize for themselves a portion of the wealth that our labor produces, constantly pushing for the largest possible share. This surplus value is the source of all their profits.

“The general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labor* more or less to its *minimum limit*,” Marx pointed out.

“If wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall,” he says, “but all these variations will not affect the value of the commodity,” which is the

long-term basis for prices.

Bosses step up their drive to cut wages during times of rising unemployment when competition among workers for jobs sharpens. “If, during the phases of prosperity, when extra profits are made,” Marx writes, a worker “did not battle for a rise in wages, he would, taking the average of one industrial cycle, not even receive his *average wages*, or the *value* of his labor.”

Governments worldwide have printed vast amounts of money to try to buy their way out of today’s capitalist crisis and to aid their bosses to compete more fiercely with rivals abroad. This spurs demand, shortages and rising prices.

Keen to deflect responsibility for soaring gas prices, President Joseph Biden Nov. 23 blamed “large companies that have not ramped up the supply of oil quickly enough.” He announced he would release 50 million barrels of oil from government stockpiles. But crude-oil prices didn’t drop.

In the face of these conditions, growing numbers of working people are discussing and taking action to defend our class interests. Every step to extend solidarity with today’s labor struggles increases the possibility of workers scoring victories that provide an example to millions of what working people can accomplish.

The biggest step forward would be to broaden workers’ fight to take control over production and political power into our own hands. For that we need to break with the Democrats and Republicans and build our own political party, a labor party.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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What the 2021 Elections Confirmed; Politics of the Unfolding Class Struggle in the U.S. and Worldwide; Continuing Struggles by Trade Unions in the U.S.; What the Socialist Workers Party Stands For. Speaker: Dave Prince, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel.: (678) 528-7828.

—CALENDAR—

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Fidel Castro: How Cuban working people made a socialist revolution

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. imperialism will never forgive working people in Cuba for overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, replacing capitalist rule with a government of workers and farmers, nationalizing U.S. and Cuban companies and opening the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

That revolution was a product of the operations of capitalism, but it could not have charted a path to victory without the political leadership of Fidel Castro. The U.S. rulers hoped when he died Nov. 25, 2016, the revolution would die with him. But five years later, his ideas and example are looked to by millions in Cuba who continue to defend their conquests.

For more than 62 years the U.S. rulers have tried to destroy the socialist revolution. They organized a mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón) in 1961; planned hundreds of attempts to assassinate Castro; and maintain a cruel economic, financial and trade embargo.

The revolutionary struggle opened after a coup by Batista, when a vanguard of men and women came together determined to oppose the dictatorship at all costs. Led by Castro, they organized an attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago July 26, 1953. It was defeated and Castro was put on trial.

His speech to the court was smuggled out of prison and tens of thousands of copies distributed. Known as “History Will Absolve Me,” it became the program of the July 26 Movement for a revolutionary struggle to win land for peasants, end chronic unemployment and exploitation, and defend democratic rights.

Under the pressure of widespread calls for amnesty, Castro and other Moncada combatants were released from prison in May 1955. He went to Mexico, returning to Cuba aboard the yacht Granma with 81 revolutionaries Dec. 2, 1956. Despite a surprise assault



Caravana de la libertad

Crowds welcome Fidel Castro and Rebel Army in Cienfuegos Jan. 6, 1959, after victory.

by Batista’s troops after they landed, some 15 made it to the Sierra Maestra where they initiated a revolutionary war.

Che Guevara describes how members of the Rebel Army were transformed in the course of the struggle. “We were beginning to feel in our flesh and blood the need for an agrarian reform and for profound and integral changes in the social structure,” he said. In areas they liberated, the Rebel Army organized working people to take charge of education, land reform, health care and justice. By December 1958, they had defeated Batista’s army.

When Batista fled the country Jan. 1, some of his generals planned a coup to hold onto power. But millions responded to Castro’s call for a general strike that paralyzed the island. Castro planned to rapidly get to Havana.

But as his Rebel Army column headed there, “the people stopped me in the towns. I was not able to do anything else but speak with the people,” Castro said. Over the next week, during what became known as the Freedom Caravan, he gave speeches in town after town.

“The whole town is here today, because everyone is interested in the problems of Cuba,” Castro told those who greeted him in Santa Clara Jan. 6. “They know they will have the final word on all questions.”

After the conquest of power, Castro led a process of discussion and debate that culminated in his July 26 Movement, the student-based Revolutionary Directorate and the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party fused. It became the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965.

The excerpt below, from a speech Castro gave on March 26, 1964, describes the impact the Freedom Caravan had on him, the deep transformation in consciousness and confidence of workers and peasants and the building of a new communist leadership in Cuba.

It’s that transformation — and the example it sets for working people in the U.S. and around the world — that Washington fears. Translation is by the *Militant*. The speech is printed in *La Revolución Cubana*, published by Ediciones Era.

❖ ❖ ❖

FIDEL CASTRO

I, too, belonged to an organization. But the glories of that organization are the glories of Cuba, they are the glories of the people, they belong to all of us. And there came a day that I stopped belonging to that organization. Which day? The day when we had made a revolution greater than our organization, the day we had a people with us, a movement far greater than our organization, near the end of the war, when we already had a victorious army that would become the army of the revolution and of all

the people, at the time of the victory, when the entire people joined us and demonstrated their support, their sympathy, their strength.

And as we moved through towns and cities, I saw lots of men and women, hundreds and thousands of men and women with the red and black uniforms of the July 26 Movement. But many more thousands wore uniforms that weren’t black and red but were the work shirts of workers and farmers and other men and women of the people. And since that day, honestly, in my heart, I left the movement that we loved, under whose banners we had fought, and I joined the people. I belonged to the people, to the revolution, because we had truly accomplished something that was greater than ourselves.

In two words, gentlemen: we have made a revolution bigger than ourselves and we have to live up to the revolution we have made. And these glories belong to the people. All. And the martyrs belong to the people. And that movement is much bigger than any of us, and together we have done bigger things than we did in the respective organizations we came from; together we fight the imperialist enemy; together we are making the socialist revolution; we defeated the invaders at Girón; together all types of men have died in the same trenches and on the same lines; and together one day, with serenity, with firmness, with honor, with immortal courage, we were all ready to die during the October [1962 missile] crisis. ...

There are many, especially our anonymous soldiers of the revolution, many anonymous combatants of the revolution, who were illiterate at the triumph of the revolution.

How many youth in the Rebel Army who could not read or write are already in junior high school, have already graduated from junior high school, now command battalions, divisions, armies, command artillery and tank brigades! How they have improved themselves, how they have grown, while others have remained stagnant! ...

They are the strength, the backbone of the revolution! Fist, arm, muscle of the revolutionary people, of the working class, of the peasants, of the workers! ...

We are making a revolution much bigger and, of course, much more important than ourselves; we are doing something that will withstand the test of time, will withstand all shocks, will withstand everything, which is enduring and eternal in time; that it’s not us ourselves, that we are nothing without the people, that we have no other strength than the strength of the people.

Further reading on the Cuban Revolution



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Protests demand ‘End US economic war on Cuba!’



Militant/Susie Berman

Forty people joined a Nov. 28 protest in Toronto, above, opposing the decadeslong U.S. government embargo against Cuba, picketing across the street from the U.S. Consulate. The action was part of monthly caravans and rallies initiated at the end of last year by the National Network on Cuba, Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) and local Cuba coalitions. Sponsors of the Toronto action included the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association-Toronto and the Juan Gualberto Gómez Association of Cubans in Toronto. Similar solidarity actions also took place in Vancouver and Montreal.

In New York some 20 people joined the monthly caravan and rally. They set up a picket line at the statue of Cuban revolutionary hero José Martí in Central Park and then held a rally that got a friendly response from many passersby who took flyers, including one who joined in. Protests also took place in Miami and other U.S. cities; London and Sheffield, England; and other countries, including in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Belgium.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Mine explosion in Russia kills over 50 workers, dozens injured

The bosses' drive for profit at the expense of safety led to a deadly coal mine methane gas explosion in the Kemerovo region of southwestern Siberia Nov. 25. Over 50 people were killed and dozens more hospitalized. Five workers who came to help in rescue operations were among those killed, and one survived.

The explosion occurred after a ventilation shaft began filling with toxic gas while 285 people were working underground in the Listvyazhnaya mine, government officials said. Methane gas levels were dangerously high prior to the blast, but no action was taken either by the company — SDS-Coal — or by government inspectors.

Among those killed was Boris Pi-yalkin, who worked three decades as a miner. A video circulated widely in Russian media by his wife, Inna Piyalkina, said he told her methane levels at the mine "were going through the roof."

"My husband came home from work every day and said it wouldn't end well," she said.

Former miner Denis Timokhin told independent TV channel Dozhd that management forces workers to keep the mine operating despite high methane concentrations. Their attitude is "If you don't want to work, quit," he said. "No safety protocols. All sensors are plugged with bags."

The government has opened a criminal case and arrested the mine's director and other officials. "It was determined that the detainees violated industrial safety requirements," the investigative committee reported.

Since the beginning of the year, the Russian government's mine oversight body had conducted 127 inspections there, finding 914 violations. The mine operator was fined a measly \$53,000.

The mine, whose main owner is billionaire Mikhail Fedyayev, had two earlier deadly explosions, one in 2004 that killed 13 workers and another in 1981 that killed five.

With coal prices reaching record levels, bosses like those at SDS-Coal seek to speed up production to maximize profits. The company is Russia's third-largest coal-mining outfit.

— Brian Williams

Hospital workers walk out to support striking engineers

OAKLAND, Calif. — The 700 members of IUOE Stationary Engineers Local 39, who are on strike at 24 Northern California Kaiser hospitals, got a boost Nov. 18 when members of other hospital unions participated in a one-day strike in support of their fight. Thousands of medical assistants, X-ray technicians, phlebotomists, lab scientists and other medical workers lined in front of Kaiser hospitals from Santa Rosa and Vacaville in the north to San Jose in the south.

Members of the SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, the Office and Professional Employees Local 29

and Engineers and Scientists of California Local 20 waved signs saying, "Their fight is our fight" and "We stand with Local 39 Engineers."

"I am surprised and happy to see how big the protest is. There is strength in numbers," Gloria Williams, a member of the SEIU, told this *Militant* worker-correspondent as she picketed outside the Oakland hospital.

As they enter their third month on strike, Local 39 has yet to see a wage offer from Kaiser competitive with those of other stationary engineers in the Bay Area. With rising inflation, they are opposed to the company's attempts to push one-time bonuses instead of wage increases that can be built on in future contract fights.

Arnitra Hands, a receptionist for Kaiser in Berkeley, said she came to the Oakland picket to support Local 39 and to spread the word about Kaiser's threat to eliminate some receptionist jobs. She said Kaiser wants to leave the patients without the help she and her co-workers give and replace them with online check-in. "Kaiser workers need to support each other," she said. "If you hurt one of us, you hurt us all."

On Nov. 19, members of the California Nurses Association walked out and joined the engineers' pickets. In a statement announcing their 24-hour solidarity strike, union President Cathy Kennedy said they support the strikers standing firm against being moved between hospitals, as the bosses want. "This model would institutionalize the staffing shortages that have already hurt patients and workers," she said.

— Betsey Stone

Unionists march in support of Erie Strayer strikers

PITTSBURGH — A Nov. 18 march in support of some 40 Iron Workers Regional Shop Local 851 members on strike at Erie Strayer since Oct. 4 brought out members of seven different area unions and family members. They included members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, union roofers, Teamsters, United Electrical workers and others.

"We have had overwhelming support



Militant/Eric Simpson

California Nurses Association members walked out for one day Nov. 19, supporting striking engineers at 24 Kaiser hospitals in Northern California. Above, picket line in San Leandro.

from this community," striker George Crawford told *Erie News Now*. "We've had multiple people drop us down care packages, anything from venison to canned goods to donuts."

Tracy Cutright, vice president of Local 851, told the *Militant* in a phone interview that the company has moved up a few cents from its original offer of five to 15 cent raises over five years. But the strikers are still demanding a three-year contract, with raises of 60 cents the first year, retroactive to when the contract ran out April 1, and 50 cents each of the following two years; a \$600 signing bonus; and, for the first time, a dental plan.

"The company says that the workers can stay out another month, but they still won't get a dental plan," Cutright said. "We'll keep fighting. The workers need dental insurance."

— Candace Wagner

Truck drivers in Australia win gains, FedEx bosses hold out

SYDNEY — FedEx drivers in New South Wales and Western Australia took part in a four-hour protest strike Nov. 22, joining other truckers across the country fighting for a pay raise to meet growing inflation and to limit the big increase of work contracted out by the bosses.

The stoppage was just one of a series of rolling strikes the Transport Workers Union planned. FedEx bosses respond-

ed with a two-day lockout.

Drivers from several companies have staged a series of protest strikes, including during the government's pandemic lockdowns. The union reached a settlement with Toll and other major trucking companies in October. These strikes were the first ever at Toll, and the first by truckers anywhere since 2010.

They said Toll had planned to hire contractors at up to 30% below union pay. The new union agreement with Toll and several other companies places limits on outsourcing, gives employees first preference over all available work, and sets the same pay rate for outside hires that direct employees get.

StarTrack, which is owned by Australia Post and had increased contracting out by some 70%, agreed to a similar deal Nov. 15.

The union canceled the next round of protest strikes against FedEx, but said the bosses' lockout meant it could now legally take action at any time. Previously they had to give three days notice.

FedEx has offered a pay raise of 9.25% over three years. Transport Workers Union National Secretary Michael Kaine described this as "a disingenuous swindle." By refusing to backdate the wage increase to 2020, when the last contract ran out, the company offer would be well below the rate of inflation.

— Bob Aiken

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 16, 1996

On December 3 hundreds of thousands of coal miners throughout Russia went on strike to demand back wages, which have not been paid for months. Union leaders estimate more than two-thirds of the country's 560,000 miners went out. According to one Associated Press report, the strike reached from the "Far East to central Russia ... idling at least 180 mines," and leaving Russian president Boris Yeltsin "concerned." Coal makes up 80 percent of Russia's heating fuel, and half the fuel used in electrical plants.

In St. Petersburg, 150 nuclear plant workers waged a day-long warning strike, coinciding with the miners' action. Retired workers, who haven't received their pension checks, blocked the Moscow-St. Petersburg railway near Tver. Government figures estimate some \$8 billion is owed in back wages to public and private sector workers.



December 17, 1971

On Dec. 3 the conflict between India and Pakistan exploded into a full-scale war, with ground combat and air raids taking place along India's borders with Pakistan in the west and Bangla Desh in the east. On the diplomatic front, India announced Dec. 6 its recognition of the government of Bangla Desh.

The United States government has clearly taken the side of Pakistan. A State Department official was quoted in the Dec. 6 *Wall Street Journal* as saying, "We would like a united Pakistan because we consider this better than an exposed, undernourished East Pakistan trying to go it alone."

The people of Bangla Desh alone have the right to decide the destiny of their country. No other country has any right to intervene against the Bangla Desh independence struggle, or to place conditions on its right to self-determination.



December 14, 1946

OAKLAND — The tremendous power in action of the working class, shown here in a mighty general strike of more than 100,000 AFL workers, forced the strikebreaking city administration to agree to the conditions demanded by the union steering committee Dec. 5.

Militant pickets this afternoon still swarmed around the entrances of Kahns and Hastings, the two strike-bound department stores where the use of police last Sunday to escort strikebreaker-driven merchandise trucks had set off the explosive force of the general strike. Last Saturday, Nov. 30, the unions received word that plans were afoot to bring in scabs to move merchandise.

The magnificent solidarity of labor triumphed. The agreement not to use police to escort strikebreakers and for the city officials to remain neutral in labor disputes was announced this morning.

New Alabama Amazon vote

The National Labor Relations Board ruled Nov. 29 that a new union election will take place at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. The decision noted election violations by the company in last spring's vote.

Back Kellogg, UMW strikers

Continued from front page line, members of BCTGM Local 3G, were excited to hear they had received a big donation from United Auto Workers members who just ended a strike at John Deere, where they made gains.

UAW Local 74’s Facebook page reports, “As we return to work and begin to start the holiday season, remember our brothers and sisters that work for Kellogg’s are still holding the line and are still on strike. The UAW Local 74 Leadership has decided to split up the food supplies left from the strike to give to these brothers and sisters. We have members going to deliver these items to Battle Creek, Michigan, and over to Omaha, Nebraska.” Local 74 is based in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Solidarity is crucial for the strikers, who’ve been on the picket line for almost two months.

The UAW international website prominently features an article about the Kellogg’s strike and encourages all UAW members to visit a picket line, send a letter of support, and/or donate to the strike fund. Several workers said what a big boost to morale it was to get the donation from UAW members at John Deere. Wyatt Elmore, a maintenance worker, said he had made trips to the Deere strike in Omaha and in Moline, Illinois. He has also volunteered to join other union members to visit Kellogg’s picket lines in Memphis and Lancaster.

“Some of the workers from the plant here are planning to travel to the other cities where Kellogg’s workers are on strike to build solidarity,” said Damion Kreger, “We talk all the time about how important this fight is and what it’s going to take to get workers fighting together. I have confidence we can do it.”

“We’re a strong union town,” he said. “Just like in Memphis, where they have the history of the civil rights movement, here in Battle Creek we were a stop on the Underground Railroad during slavery. Sojourner Truth lived here during the last years of her life and the town honored her with a statue and a

wall full of plaques. People of Battle Creek come from this tradition.”

Kreger said he had been preparing for this fight for years. “We all knew this was coming because of the way the company has treated us,” he said. Kreger was hired as a casual worker and “treated even worse than the ‘transitional’ workers” on today’s two-tier setup.

“We had no insurance or benefits, we made about \$19 an hour. They could change our shifts, or work us overtime at any time, and fire us for any reason,” he said. “I sometimes worked day shift one day, then nights the next, then days again the next. I gave it my all because I wanted to become a legacy employee. I was so stressed I got shingles at age 35, but I never missed a day of work even when I had it.”

“I’ve heard that a couple of workers from Battle Creek have visited the picket lines in Memphis and other cities,” said BCTGM International Representative Lisa Gregory in a Nov. 29 phone interview. “These are rank-and-file workers who just get in a car and go. Back in 2013 when the Kellogg’s workers in Memphis were locked out, there were workers from all the other plants who went there to show solidarity. I hope that we can get more strikers to travel to other places where there are strikes going on. There are strikes all over the country right now.”

Strike battle at Warrior Met Coal

One of the longest strike battles in the country is the fight by 1,100 United Mine Workers union members against Warrior Met Coal bosses in Brookwood, Alabama. Their strike began April 1. The miners are fighting to retake gains they were forced to give up in 2016 after the previous owner, Jim Walters Resources, went bankrupt. Their wages were cut by \$6 an hour and pensions and health insurance slashed.

They’re also fighting against one of the most severe court injunctions against picketing the labor movement has faced in decades. They are barred



Striking Warrior Met coal miners from Brookwood, Alabama, members of United Mine Workers union, and their supporters protested at NY offices of hedge fund BlackRock July 28.

from any kind of union activity within 300 yards of entrances to the mining complex. The union organized protests against the anti-working-class court order across the country Nov. 18.

The company is trying to break us,” UMW striker Steven Mote told the *Militant* in a Nov. 30 phone interview. “Most of the guys are working other jobs now, in addition to doing their picket duty.” Mote said he’s working as a truck driver for a chicken processing company. “The court injunction against us is totally unconstitutional,” he said. “It’s against freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. We need to get back on the picket line, big time.”

“The court is in the company’s pocket,” he added.

Kellogg to hire replacement workers

On Nov. 22 BCTGM union and company negotiators met, but the talks went nowhere. After talks broke off, Kellogg’s bosses announced they would start hiring permanent replacement workers.

“These are empty threats,” said Gregory. “They are hoping to scare workers into accepting their offer. But our members are standing strong.”

Production remains very low at the

Battle Creek plant, Gregory and pickets told the *Militant*. Elmore and Chris Hebner said what’s being produced there isn’t fit for human consumption and is being sold off as animal feed.

“The boxes of cereal on store shelves now are from Mexico,” said Gregory. “You can tell by the code on the box and the fact they don’t have a union label.”

A new round of negotiations was scheduled for Nov. 30. “The big issue is still the ‘transitional’ employees,” said Gregory. “The company thought they could divide the workforce” using two tiers, “but instead we’ve become more united. They really underestimated the workers.”

Around the holidays “we’re encouraging other locals of the BCTGM to come out to the picket lines with donations and support, as well as other unions and anyone who wants to support us,” Gregory said. “Any kind of support is welcome, a card, a visit, a shoutout on Facebook.”

Support the strikers! Visit their picket lines or go to the BCTGM.org website where you can post a contribution to each of the four striking union locals.

Susan LaMont in Atlanta contributed to this article.

Democrats’ claim Trump a ‘Russian puppet’ exposed as big lie

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For over five years all wings of the Democratic Party, the FBI, and much of the media have campaigned relentlessly to bring down Donald Trump. One of their central claims, written up in a dossier by former British spy Christopher Steele, was that Trump was in cahoots with the Russian government. Their drive to promote this big lie trampled on rights that workers have an important stake in defending.

The hatred liberals direct at Trump is aimed at the “deplorable” working people who couldn’t bring themselves to vote for Hillary Clinton in 2016, and who they fear will not vote Democratic in 2024. In fact, millions were looking for an alternative to both the parties that have switched places in Washington for decades with nothing but disregard for the worsening conditions working people face. In the absence of a party of labor, many were attracted to Trump, who ran as an outsider and promised to bring back jobs.

On Nov. 4 Igor Danchenko, the Steele dossier’s “primary subsource,” was indicted on five counts of lying to the FBI in 2017. Steele dressed up hearsay about Trump coming from Danchenko and gave it to the FBI.

Danchenko is accused of hiding from the FBI his work with Democratic Party public relations executive Charles Dolan. Dolan was Virginia state chair of Bill Clinton’s 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns, and got a job in the State Department under the Clinton administration.

The indictment says Danchenko asked Dolan for information he could use in his “project against Trump.” Dolan replied he’d had a drink with a “GOP friend of mine who knows some of the players.” He later told the FBI that the “GOP friend” didn’t exist and he’d simply passed onto Danchenko some salacious rumors he’d seen in the press. The indictment says Danchen-



Adam Schiff, Democrat chair of House Intelligence Committee, displays blown-up picture of President Donald Trump meeting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Democrats mounted furious campaign against Trump based on false claims from now discredited Steele dossier, inset.

ko knew the allegations that Moscow helped the Trump campaign that he passed to Steele were untrue. A transcript in the indictment says FBI officials who grilled Danchenko in 2017 also knew he was lying.

Steele wrote his dossier while he was working for Fusion GPS, a Washington-based research firm. It was funded by the Democratic Party National Committee on behalf of the Hillary Clinton campaign. It “should have been called the Clinton dossier,” pointed out Kimberley Strassel in a Nov. 4 *Wall Street Journal* column.

Despite British spy agencies casting doubt on Steele’s credibility, liberals and the FBI kept pushing his smears. A 2016 article in the liberal magazine *Mother Jones* touted Steele as a “credible source with a proven record of providing reliable, sensitive, and important information to the U.S. government.”

Fabrications about Trump’s connections to Moscow were not only to smear him. Steele’s “evidence” was used by the FBI to get courts to rub-

ber stamp a warrant for its agents to wiretap and spy on Trump campaign adviser Carter Page.

For decades the FBI, the capitalist rulers’ political police, have spied on militant workers, Black rights fighters, anti-war campaigners and communists. Many of their operations were exposed in the Socialist Workers Party’s successful 14-year political campaign and lawsuit against FBI spying. The spy agency was forced to admit to 204 burglaries of SWP offices and sending 1,300 undercover informers into the party between 1945 and 1966.

In 2016 the Democrats used the FBI and many of these same weapons against a rival capitalist party.

Steele’s malicious smears of Trump have continued to be used since to justify FBI probes, including a nearly two-year-long “investigation” by former FBI Director Robert Mueller, who found no proof of Russian collusion; two failed impeachment prosecutions; hounding and prosecution of Trump’s allies;

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Frame-up of Philadelphia IBEW union official shows need to fight gov’t interference in our unions

BY JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA — John Dougherty, longtime head of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 98 here, resigned the day after he was convicted of “honest services wire fraud” in U.S. District Court Nov. 15. Dougherty, known as “Johnny Doc,” also headed the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council.

“Justice was not served today, and I can’t tell you how disappointed I am by the jury’s decision,” Dougherty said after the verdict.

In an anti-labor frame-up trial that began Oct. 4, prosecutors argued that Dougherty “bribed” three-term City Council member Bobby Henon, a former electrician and the union’s former political director, to win contracts providing work for 5,000 IBEW Local 98 members. They both face up to 20 years in prison. The U.S. prosecutor’s office here has a long history of meddling into local union affairs and bringing charges against union officials.

Prosecutors “said Dougherty bought himself a City Council member,” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote. He continued to pay Henon his IBEW union salary while he also was a paid City Council member.

Many other city councilors are paid for outside jobs. Prosecutors said Dougherty bought Henon tickets to Philadelphia Eagles games.

In exchange, prosecutors argued, Henon allowed Dougherty “to control his vote.” They tried to paint it as suspicious that two union officers might tend to see many things the same way.

During the trial, building trades unionists demonstrated outside the courthouse Nov. 8, carrying signs reading, “Stop the attack on workers” and “We are the 99%.”

Construction jobs have plummeted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Building Trades Council here reported a 60% unemployment rate for their members in April 2020.

For more than 15 years, the FBI and local and federal prosecutors have been on an unrelenting campaign to harass and weaken the union, using wiretaps and raids on the union headquarters, Dougherty’s home and Henon’s office. Local 98 said the frame-up wasn’t “a prosecution, it’s a persecution.”

“Evidence” used by prosecutors included potential union agreements with the telecommunications giant Comcast, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, and

Verizon that the City Council took up.

“People hate Comcast,” the jury heard Dougherty tell Henon on a wiretapped phone call. Comcast “can’t believe they’re not getting their way, and they’re not just stampeding [through the council].” The union was fighting to organize Comcast jobs on city property.

Keep government out of our unions

Henon was also found guilty of bribery for accepting campaign donations from Communications Workers of America Local 13000 in 2015 in exchange for calling a public hearing on Verizon. This was while 39,000 CWA and IBEW members on the East Coast were battling against company take-back demands that led to a seven-week strike the next year.

In a similar anti-union operation here in 2015, the federal prosecutor’s office got the business manager of Ironworkers Local 401 in Philadelphia, Joseph Dougherty (no relation), convicted of racketeering, conspiracy, arson and extortion. “Joe Doc,” now 79, is serving 19 years in federal prison.

Joe Mathis, a retired member of Local 401 who supported the Ironworkers during that trial, told the *Militant*,

“I don’t think the government should be involved in the activities of the unions. And the way they went after our union, the members are afraid of further government intervention.”

The anti-labor investigation of union officials by the government has nothing to do with prosecutors’ concern about corruption in unions or the well-being of the rank and file. The government’s aim is to weaken the unions on behalf of the bosses, and to tie up any pro-union activity in regulations and red tape.

Many of our unions have problems today, the result of decades of class collaborationism, from less and less union democracy, to corruption. One of the biggest problems is how union officials have tied workers to dependence on Democratic Party so-called friends of labor — instead of organizing the unorganized and relying on the capacity and strength of the rank and file to fight in our own interests and to champion the struggles of all those exploited and oppressed by capital.

But to change this for the better, we’ve got to keep the government’s hands off our unions. The only way to strengthen the labor movement is by the actions of the union members ourselves, including

action against government interference.

Today we see signs of a shift in the labor movement, as unions take on the bosses and their drive to attack our wages, schedules and working conditions, and are standing up to fight. Warrior Met coal miners in Alabama, bakery workers at Kellogg’s and many others are saying “No!” to divisive multitier contracts, cuts in health benefits, attacks on pensions, speedup and forced overtime, and unsafe conditions.

“As we gain self-confidence and class consciousness through our struggles we can use our collective strength to form our own political party, a labor party,” Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party 2021 candidate for Philadelphia district attorney, told the *Militant*. The SWP campaign fought to expose the government’s frame-up against Dougherty. “A labor party will get a huge hearing among working people, and open the door to expand the labor movement.”

“We need a course to take state power out of the hands of the dog-eat-dog capitalist profiteers and take it into our own hands,” Hart said. “To put in power a workers and farmers government that will reorganize production under workers control to meet human needs.”

mountains of ink denouncing those who weren’t smart enough to vote against him; banning Trump from Facebook and other social media; and endless claims by Adam Schiff, House Intelligence Committee chair, that his committee has the real evidence of Trump’s collusion with Moscow, which of course he’s never produced.

The charges against Danchenko stem from the probe by special counsel John Durham, who was appointed by then Attorney General William Barr to review decisions made by the FBI while they were investigating Trump. Schiff tried to get Durham’s probe shut down before it led to any indictments.

The sharpness of the liberals’ campaign against Trump is rooted in the rising fear among the rulers and their servants in the middle class that more working people will see that the bosses and their parties will continue offloading the crisis of their profit system onto us. Under these conditions working people will seek ways to defend ourselves, something the rulers are determined to prevent.

The rulers’ scorn toward workers was evident as far back as 2008 in remarks by then presidential candidate Barack Obama. He complained that workers in small towns and rural areas hard hit by unemployment, “get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them.”

Liberals have kept their witch hunt against Trump going, through hearings before the House Select Committee on the Jan. 6 break-in of Congress, which they pitch as a conspiracy to carry out a “coup.” Prosecutors have been unable to come up with evidence of conspiracies to overthrow the government. Instead, they are going after those involved on charges of trespass, disorderly conduct, and obstruction of an official proceeding.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

Decades of spying and disruption by FBI targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies. How expansion of “national security” state to protect capitalist rule had bipartisan backing.

FBI on Trial: The victory in the Socialist Workers Party suit against government spying

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SWP fought US gov't to open doors to Jews fleeing Nazi terror

The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and Resolutions, 1938-39 is one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month* for December. The communist movement in the U.S. was founded in 1919 to emulate the proletarian internationalist course of the 1917 Russian Revolution as V.I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks led workers and farmers to power. The SWP was forged out of the struggle to continue that course, including deepening an orientation to the industrial working class and unions. Its founding resolutions covered the fight against the bosses' assaults at home, the rise of fascism in Europe and the drive toward war by Washington and other imperialist powers. The excerpt is from the "Theses on the Jewish Question." Copyright © 1982 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Our approach to the Jewish question can be none other than that of the international class struggle. In its death agony the capitalist class maintains itself in power by resorting to unmitigated brutality and violence aimed at the working class, particularly at its vanguard. It utilizes every element of hatred and prejudice which it can fan into flame to bring about division among the masses and to establish a social basis for its fascist, gangster rule. The Jews, by virtue



SWP helped organize picket at German Consulate in New York, November 1938, after Nazi Kristallnacht anti-Semitic program. Party demanded Washington open doors to Jewish refugees.

of the fact that everywhere they form only a small minority of the population, and because anti-Semitism has always been fostered, sometimes openly, sometimes in masked form, constitute an easy scapegoat upon whom the big bourgeoisie can divert the pent-up, dangerous wrath of the backward elements among the masses, and particularly of the desperate middle classes. The fascist hirelings of the big bourgeoisie use the most vicious, lying propaganda to inflame to pogrom temperature the dormant antagonism to the Jews. Precisely because the fomenting of anti-Semitism has become an inseparable part of the technique of fascist reaction, the revolutionary party has a double duty to perform in combating it. It has the duty of exposing the real aims of the capitalists, hidden behind the smokescreen of anti-Semitism and thereby inoculating the masses against the poison; it has also the special task of mobilizing the real defense of the persecuted Jews, a defense of necessity based on the might of the organized working class. ...

The present decay of capitalism on a world scale and in each and every country, has ... not merely arrested the movement towards assimilation but has brought its speedy reversal. To defend its hold on property and its exploitation of the toiling masses, national capitalism makes use of the ideology of national chauvinism. This is made the foundation of the totalitarian state. In the name of national chauvinism democratic rights are completely stripped

from the working class. In exchange for these rights the masses are permitted the unrestricted play of anti-Semitism. The reactionary measures taken against the Jews in Germany and Austria, driving so many to suicide, are a yardstick by which to measure the strides taken by rotting capitalism back to the Middle Ages. At one stroke the Jews are deprived not only of their democratic rights as citizens, but of the elementary possibility of earning a livelihood. In this hideous fashion does capitalist democracy reach its end, not having lasted long enough to permit assimilation.

Many Jews — and not only Jews — delude themselves with the soothing thought that America is different, that these same phenomena cannot happen here. They continue to picture the United States as a great melting pot with a democracy far more securely founded than was European democracy. But the Jews and the entire working class must be forewarned — the same causes leading to decay are visibly at work here, and the same results are not merely possible but absolutely inevitable unless the working class learns, and learns quickly, to defend its hard-earned rights and to take the road to power. The second crisis piled on top of the first one leaves the capitalist ruling class in a serious predicament and in a quandary concerning the way out. That it is fearful of its continued domination and considers the advisability of strong measures — fascist measures — cannot be doubted. The symptoms of increased discrimination

against the Jews, of anti-Semitism, are already present. We must immediately sound the alarm to put the working class on guard against all the reactionary conspiracies of the big bourgeoisie; more particularly we must awaken the Jewish masses to a sense of realization of the danger and above all we must propose the proper measures to be taken against the growing danger. ...

In view of the awful plight of the Jews, it must be made a special point in the program of the various sections of the Fourth International to fight against restrictions on immigration, particularly Jewish immigration. In the U.S. we must fight against the imposing of barriers such as the necessity to prove by showing money or through affidavits that the immigrant will not become a public charge. Part of our combating of anti-Semitism must take the form of a fight for unrestricted immigration for refugees, especially Jews. ...

The Jews form a small minority of the American population — some 4.5 million out of 130 million. If the defense of the Jews depended on themselves alone, then their case would indeed be hopeless. But here again the Jewish masses must be shown the bridge to our movement, that of the Fourth International. For it is primarily upon the American workers that the Jews must lean for support in their struggle to maintain their joint rights. Our propaganda against anti-Semitism is directed not to Jews but first of all to the American working class. It draws at every point the lesson that the attack against the Jews is merely the spearhead of the attack against the American working class for the purpose of lowering their standards of living and rendering them powerless to resist this economic blow by depriving them of their democratic rights. The workers and the Jewish masses are natural allies in the antifascist struggle. Our propaganda among both is to convince them to defeat fascism the workers must establish socialism. Not only the general working class is the natural ally of the Jews, but all the other national minorities ... can be enlisted in the struggle for the rights of national minorities including the Jews. Above all the Negroes must be linked up with the struggle against reaction, for the Negroes are the worst victims of capitalist exploitation. Their struggle for equal rights is of the utmost importance for the workers' cause.

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Support women’s right to have an abortion!

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equality and the unity of working people. The proponents of the Mississippi law claim women today have made such great strides in access to jobs, higher pay, more equality in family division of household chores, that they no longer need access to the right to abortion to control their own future. But this is a lie.

Through hard-fought battles, women and supporters of women’s rights *have* made gains, but oppression of women is an essential component of capitalist rule and class society. The assault on abortion rights today is part of a counterrevolution against the fight for women’s emancipation and an attack on the unity of the working class.

Organizing and mobilizing to win a majority to defend this right can only be accomplished through discussion and debate, and public actions to defend abortion rights, that can help win those not yet convinced.

Abortion was decriminalized in 1973 by the Supreme Court before debate about why it is a fundamental right had been decisively fought out. Liberals on the court bypassed that struggle, legalizing access to abortion on medical criteria of fetal viability, allow-

ing state governments to ban it earlier and earlier.

For decades the liberal-led women’s movement has refused to organize a fight, arguing women should work to elect Democrats and they’ll take care of everything. This has made it easier for opponents of women’s rights to make progress in confusing the scientific and political questions involved. They have systematically attacked and rolled back women’s access to getting an abortion.

The growing number of strikes taking place show that something else is possible. By relying on our own forces and fighting for what we need, workers are scoring some victories that set an example to millions about what our class is capable of accomplishing.

The fight for women’s emancipation is crucial for building the unity of the working class and the bigger class battles that will come. The fight for women’s right to choose abortion is a union issue.

And it is crucial to the coming revolutionary struggles to bring an end to capitalist rule and replace it with a workers and farmers government. This is the road to bring an end to all the oppression intrinsic to class society, including the subjugation of women.

Georgia jury convicts killers of Ahmaud Arbery

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fore charges were brought. It was a leak of a video of the killing taken by Bryan that broke the case open.

After contentious jury selection that resulted in a jury of 11 Caucasians and one Black, the trial began Nov. 5.

In her opening statement, Cobb County prosecutor Linda Dunikoski told the jury the three defendants acted with deadly intent as they hunted Arbery down, trapped him, and, when he tried to defend himself, shot and killed him. She explained how the elder McMichael told police he shouted at Arbery, “Stop or I’ll blow your f---ing head off!”

“This isn’t the Wild West,” she told jurors, saying the accused jumped to assumptions about a “Black man running down the street.”

The defendants and their attorneys staked their defense on a Civil War-era law that allows civilians to conduct a “citizen’s arrest” if they saw someone commit a felony, or if they had probable cause to believe someone committed a crime.

Travis McMichael, who fired three blasts from his shotgun and killed Arbery, which was graphically shown on the leaked video, was the only defendant to take the stand. He said he and his father chased Arbery believing he was involved in neighborhood burglaries.

Arbery and others had been seen on security camera footage entering a home under construction there. On different occasions Arbery, who jogged through the neighborhood, is never seen taking anything.

Asked why he and his father grabbed their guns and chased Arbery, Travis McMichael said he believed the youth might be armed.

When the three defendants chased Arbery, he turned and tried to disarm the closest one, who was Travis McMichael. He told the jury it was self-defense, claiming, “It was a life or death situation.”

Cops, prosecutors aid cover-up

Cops arriving on the scene after the shooting of Arbery treated the McMichaels as one of their own, taking their word for what happened. Their body camera footage shows them involved in casual banter with the McMichaels. No attempt is made to render aid to Arbery.

“If I could have got a shot at the guy, I’d have shot him myself,” Gregory McMichael told the cops.

Local prosecutors refused to press charges. State authorities stepped in after the video became public and opened the case that led to the trial.

Defense attorneys repeatedly shot their clients in the foot by raising racial issues throughout the trial. When the trial opened, they urged Superior Court Judge Timothy Walmsley to bar gatherings on courthouse grounds by Arbery supporters. Bryan’s defense attorney complained about Black pastors sitting with the Arbery family in court and asked the judge to bar

their attendance. “We don’t want any more Black pastors coming in here,” he said.

In response, hundreds of Black pastors and others gathered on courthouse grounds. Defense attorneys then moved for a mistrial, denied by the judge.

Throughout the trial defense attorneys attempted to paint Arbery as a criminal.

The judge denied defense motions to allow Arbery’s past encounters with the law and a dubious opinion of his mental health to be presented to the jury, pointing out the defendants had no knowledge of this when they decided to pursue Arbery.

In a final effort to turn the victim into the criminal, defense attorney Laura Hogue said, “Turning Ahmaud Arbery into a victim after the choices that he made does not reflect the reality of what brought Ahmaud Arbery to Satilla Shores in his khaki shorts with no socks to cover his long, dirty toenails.”

The prosecutor largely tried to downplay race in the trial. One *New York Times* article said Dunikoski presented her case to the jury like a “strict high school teacher,” marshaling facts about the three defendants and their conduct toward Arbery.

The judge denied an attempt by the prosecution to place in evidence a statement by Bryan to police that Travis McMichael had called Arbery a f---ing n--ger” after shooting him. The judge ruled the allegation was too inflammatory and prejudicial. Use of a statement by one of the defendants to incriminate another could also violate constitutional protections against self-incrimination.

It didn’t take long for the jury to return a verdict. Travis McMichael, who fired the shots killing Arbery, was convicted on all nine counts, including malice murder, meaning he deliberately intended to kill Arbery. All three were convicted of aggravated assault, false imprisonment and attempt to falsely imprison. Gregory McMichael and William Bryan were not found guilty of malice murder, but of felony murder, which is when a group of people commit a felony where someone is killed, even if they weren’t responsible.

In the name of fighting crime, many capitalist politicians and prosecutors have used “felony murder” charges in many states across the country to obtain harsh and long sentences.

In this case, these two convictions can carry the same life sentence as Travis McMichael’s conviction for malice murder. Judge Walmsley has yet to set a sentencing hearing. Attorneys for all three defendants say they will appeal.

The three defendants also face a federal trial on hate crimes charges. Once used as a way to get around the refusal of segregationist government officials in the South to prosecute racist violence against Blacks and denial of civil rights, such laws today are increasingly used to erode defendants’ constitutional protection against double jeopardy.

Australia gov’t leads military intervention in Solomon Islands

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY — Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced Nov. 25 that he was sending Australian imperialist police and military to “provide security and stability” by suppressing anti-government demonstrations in the Solomon Islands, some 1,000 miles northeast in the South Pacific.

For several days protests in the capital city, Honiara, on Guadalcanal island, calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, had grown increasingly violent. Chinese-owned shops and businesses were targeted. Three people died in fires. Sogavare had asked for Canberra to send troops.

Opposition to the Sogavare government has been fueled by worsening economic conditions, but was triggered by frictions over Honiara’s growing economic ties with Beijing. While Beijing is the Solomon Islands’ biggest trading partner, Australia is its second biggest source of imports.

A special response group of 23 Australian Federal Police hit the ground in Honiara Nov. 26. Another 50 followed to “guard critical infrastructure assets,” as well as 43 Australian troops to “protect Honiara’s airport.” The governments of Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand are contributing scores more personnel to the Australian-led “peacekeeping” forces.

Australian cops moved to help break up the demonstrations and impose a nighttime curfew. Over 100 people have been arrested.

Canberra’s intervention was supported by the Labor Party opposition in Parliament and welcomed by bourgeois commentators here. “Nothing could be more directly in Australia’s national interests,” wrote Greg Sheridan, foreign editor of the *Australian*, than “preserving regional stability and limiting undue Chinese influence in the South Pacific.”

The Australian rulers regard this region as part of their imperial sphere of influence and view Chinese investment and influence here as a threat. Canberra’s intervention in the Solomons comes in the wake of the signing of the AUKUS military pact between the imperialist rulers of the U.S., Australia and the U.K. aimed at curbing Beijing’s growing economic clout and military ambitions in the Pacific.

Drawing increased attention from Washington and Canberra, the rulers of China, and Taiwan — which Beijing claims over the objection of Washington — have stepped up competition in the South Pacific for influence. In 2019 the government of the Solomon Islands broke diplomatic ties with Taipei in favor of Beijing.

Daniel Suidani, premier of Malaita, the most populous of the Solomon Islands, opposed the country establishing diplomatic relations with Beijing and has maintained close relations with Taipei.

Suidani opposed Australia sending police and troops to the Solomons, saying it was “an internal matter.” The majority of those involved in the current demonstrations are reported to have come from Malaita. Worsening economic conditions, especially rising joblessness, helped spur the protests.

Solomon Islands, with a population of close to 700,000, is one of the least developed nations in the world. The majority of its people make a precarious living from subsistence farming and fishing. Conditions have worsened in the last couple of years through enforced isolation due to the COVID pandemic.

Conflict between the Malaita administration and the central government on Guadalcanal goes back many years in that former British colony. After two decades of depression conditions and unequal development, a civil war erupted in 1998 between rival militias from the two islands.

Australia and New Zealand, the two imperialist powers in the region, launched interventions in 2000 and again in 2003. Hundreds of Australian troops were deployed in the Solomon Islands and remained there as part of a so-called Regional Assistance Mission until 2017. The expensive operation strengthened Canberra’s hand but left working people there no better off.